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LITERARY MISCELLANY.

From the Knickerbocker of August.

Life's Lessons.

"And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing."
SHAKSPEARE.

Let us go to the hall, where the red wine flows,
And the roses and myrtles are gaily wreathed;
Where many a cheek with its deep joy glows,
And the sad, sweet music of lute is breathed.
Ere morning comes, the scene will be fled,
Faded will be the dreams of bliss;
The song will be hushed and the roses dead—
Is there nought to be learned by this?

Let us go to the shore, where the sea-shells lie,
And the sand with weeds and wrecks is strown;
Where o'er the rocks the cold waves fly,
And makes their hollow a sullen moan:
Those desolate things were cast away
From the false breast of the raging seas;
And there they are sadly left to decay—
Is there not a lesson in these?

Let us go to the wood, where the hawthorn blows,
When its leaves in the soft spring-time are green;
When its mantle around it the woodbine throws,
And the pearly flowrets peep between:
Oh, we shall find a moral in them,
Thus with the leaves deceitfully twined;
Decking awhile the thorny stem,
Yet drooping off with the first rude wind!

Let us go the fields when the storm is o'er,
And the rain-drops sparkle like stars at eve;
When the thunder-peal is heard no more,
And the ocean's bosom hath ceased to heave;
Then shall we see the rainbow bright,
From the gloomy clouds and the sunshine wrought,
Shedding on all things its colored light—
Something, surely, by this is taught!

Let us go to the graves, where our loved ones are,
And let us choose the midnight time,
When the heavens are glorious with many a star,
And silence and grandeur raise thoughts sublime;
And as we look from the mouldering dust
Up to the cope of the beauteous sky;
So shall our spirit ascend, in their trust,
To the HOLY SPIRIT that dwelleth on high.

Liverpool, England. M. E. B.

From the Prairie Beacon.

The Mississippi Valley.---1814--1815.

The British troops, after hovering awhile on the gulf shore, finally debarked at Bayon Bienvenu, fifteen miles south-east of New Orleans. Large reinforcements arrived at the American Camp on the 21st of December from Tennessee, and Gen. JACKSON immediately resolved to give the enemy battle. On the evening of the 23d, he made a sudden and furious attack on the British camp, which was then pitched near the main channel of the river, about eight miles below the city. Commodore Patterson at the same time opened a destructive fire upon the enemy, from the schooner Caroline.—The British troops were thrown into disorder, but soon rallied and fought with great bravery. They gave way a second time, and Gen. Jackson withdrew his forces, fortified a position four miles below New Orleans and prepared to receive the enemy.

On the 28th of December and the 1st of January attacks were made upon this position but without success. In the meantime the British were reinforced, and an additional force of 2,250 men had reached the American camp from Kentucky. General Packenham, the British commander, now resolved to exert all his strength in a combined attack upon the American position on both sides of the river. With almost incredible industry, he united Lake Borgne with the Mississippi by a canal, and conveyed a part of his boats and artillery to that river. All things being prepared, the 8th of January was assigned for the assault. In the night, the enemy transported a regiment across the river, to storm the works on the western bank and to turn the guns against the Americans on the opposite side.

The 8th of January dawned. The main body of the enemy, consisting of seven or eight thousand men, marched from their camp to the assault. While approaching, fearless & undaunted, showers of grape-shot thinned their ranks. No sooner had they reached within musket-shot than a vivid stream of fire burst from the American lines. Gen. Jackson had so arranged his troops that those in the rear loaded for those in front, enabling them to fire with scarcely a moment's intermission. The militia of the West, trained from infancy to the use of the rifle, seldom took unsteady or uncertain aim. The plain was soon covered with dead and wounded. Some British regiments faltered and fell back; others advanced and presented new victims.—While bravely leading to the breastwork, the regiment which bore the ladders, Gen. Packenham was slain. In attempting to restore order and to rally the fugitives, Gen. Gibbs, the second in command, was wounded mortally, and Gen. Keene severely. Without officers to direct them, the troops first halted, then fell back, and soon fled in disorder to their camp. In little more than an hour, two thousand of the enemy were laid prostrate upon the field; while of the Americans but seven were killed and six wounded—a disproportion of loss without a parallel in the annals of warfare.

The events of the day, on the west side of the river, present a striking instance of the uncertainty of warlike operations. There the Americans under Gen. Morgan were thrice the number of the assailants, and were protected by intrenchments; still they ingloriously fled. They were closely pursued, until the British party received intelligence of the defeat of the main army, when they withdrew from pursuit and recrossed the river.—The British felt no disposition longer to contest the possession of a soil that had been so fatal to them; and Gen. Lambert, upon whom the command had devolved, prepared to return to his shipping. In his retreat he was not molested. General Jackson wisely resolving to hazard nothing that he had gained, in attempting to gain still more.

It may well be supposed, that a scene of rejoicing, past the power of words to describe, ensued in the American camp and at New Orleans. The brave troops of the West returned to their homes covered with imperishable honors, to hand down the story of their achievements to their children. On the morning of their victory, it might have been said with propriety:

"He that outlives this day and comes safe home,
Will stand on tip-toe, when this day is named."

At this time, however differently persons may estimate the political character of Gen. Jackson, no one can fail to acknowledge his wisdom, bravery and efficiency in the prosecution of this campaign. The emergencies of the case called for such a General.

On the 13th day of January peace was officially announced in the camp. Previous to breaking up his camp, the General issued an impressive and affectionate address to his brave companions in arms. On his way home, grateful and affectionate honors awaited him every where, and most of all at home, where he was welcomed by his fellow-citizens, with a reception that must have been more delightful, than all his previous triumphs.

From the Trenton Emporium.

The Golden Chain.

In mingling with the busy multitude that throngs the theatre of life, and casting around us an observing eye, we may glean many lessons of wisdom. Evil examples abound, and these are to be studied and *avoided*. Good ones are also to be found, and these should command our *imitation*, as well as admiration. We journey through a country so full of devious roads and winding paths, that sometimes it is difficult to determine which is the straight forward way, and we are in danger of turning to the right hand or to the left very often—but the examples afforded by the history and condition of others, if properly studied, would generally prove fingerposts, in doubtful cases, to point us in the right course. I have little doubt that the exercise of a moderate share of wisdom and prudence, in at least nine cases out of ten, will enable us to escape most of the ills of life. Indeed so satisfied am I that men are generally the cause of their own misfortunes, that whenever I see a poor half starved looking soul, wandering about with holes in his elbows, and his toes peeping out of his shoes, I say to myself 'that man has been imprudent,' and I ask the reader when he beholds such a spectacle to apply the test and see whether he differs much from me in the conclusion. I sat down however to tell a story.

In a neat village, in that wild and romantic country to which the reader has been led so often, the banks of the Susquehanna, not far from Alesbury, lived a family by the name of Merton, in middling circumstances, respected and contented. Mary Merton was the eldest of six daughters who, having been judiciously brought up to habits of industry and economy, were rather assistants than drawbacks upon their parents. They were all well behaved, good looking girls, and in the bright summer holidays, and long winter evenings, seldom failed to be plentifully supplied with those necessary, though often mischievous, troublesome, and worthless things, called gallants. The Mertons had some wealthy relatives in Philadelphia, and one of them, a generous old bachelor, sent Mary one summer an elegant gold chain, with a diamond clasp, of exquisite workmanship, and great value. I do not know precisely the amount in dollars, but it was some hundreds; and these were speedily magnified into thousands by the astonished natives, whose eyes had never beheld so rich a spectacle.

Mary Merton was accordingly the toast in all the country round—the golden chain evidently added wonderfully to her charms—she was courted by every body, and had her choice among the beaux. She married. The chain adorned her neck at the wedding; and the bridegroom looked most lovingly on her and on the bright folds of that gay ornament alternately, 'and smiled and looked, and smiled and looked again.' For a time she wore it in every party, and was the envy of her less fortunate companions, and although when the first wonder wore away they ridiculed it a little, and remarked that Mary's wedding and outfit was only ten times more costly to her father than it would have been had she never seen the chain, that it made fine clothes necessary to correspond with it, &c., yet it was easily seen that the young married couple bore themselves more stately, and with more *self* complacency than was usual, on its account, and the young bride even showed some symptoms of superior importance towards her husband, and these proved that she did not regard what others might say or think.

Time passed away; the young people began the world genteelly—but things did not prosper well. The mistress of such a golden chain could not descend to the entire level of usefulness and industry in family matters. The husband became infected with sundry notions of gentility, not altogether compatible with his circumstances. The chain became a sinking fund. It brought one expense after another, and yielded no profit—for it was a present and could not be sold—and it turned out in the end a ruinous affair.—One of the last recollections associated with Mary and her partner, is the sale of the golden chain, by the constable, for a store debt, containing many an item of silk and satin and all the et ceteras of extravagance. They left the country soon after, in poverty and mortification.

The story is short and leaves the greater room for improvement. Whenever I see a poor person wrapped up in family pride, and holding his head, full of notions of quality, in lofty idleness, above the common class, I cannot help thinking of the golden chain, and the consequences that grew out of its possession.

When I see a young lady, remarkably handsome, or accomplished, and priding herself on the one or the other, I fear the lad who catches her will catch a golden chain into the bargain.

It is somewhat questionable, whether, under any circumstances, a life of idleness is an innocent life. He who is not engaged in some useful employment, cannot certainly fulfil the duty every one owes to society and his maker. No elevation, no wealth, no rank, can be disgraced by labor. So the great Cincinnatus thought. A mistake has in our days crept into society, viz: Industry is considere disgraceful, and Idleness, honorable—the reverse is the motto of wisdom.—*Oakwood.*

Burr's Conspiracy.

The late General John Adair, who died recently in the West, was said to be the last man living that possessed a *personal* knowledge of Col. Burr's views, plans and resources. The General being pressed in 1807 to state what these were, thus wrote:

"So far as I know or believe of the intentions of Col. Burr, (and my enemies will agree that I am not ignorant on the subject,) they were to prepare and head an expedition into Mexico, predicated on a war between the two governments; without a war he could do nothing. On this war taking place he calculated with certainty, as well from the policy of the measure at this time, as from the positive assurance of Wilkinson, who seemed to have the power to force it in his own hands. This continued to be the object of Col. Burr, until he heard of the novel and strange bargain made by Wilkinson on the Saline river: this information he received soon after the attempt to arrest him at Frankfort. He then turned his attention altogether toward strengthening himself on the Washita, and waiting a more favorable crisis. I thought the first of these objects honorable and worthy the attention of any man; but I was not engaged in it, my political as well as private pursuits forbidding me to take a part, until it was over; nor did I ever believe, notwithstanding Wilkinson's swaggering letter to me on the subject, that war would take place."

Greek Balls and Dances.

GREEK BALL.—All Greeks are passionately fond of this amusement, which is encouraged by the priests, who sanction its indulgence even on the Sabbath.—Any exclusion from a village ball is unknown; no invitations are necessary. The doors of a house are thrown open, the guitar and fiddle strike up, accompanied by the stentorian voices of the musicians, and the rooms are instantaneously filled as it were by magic. Even women with infants in their arms are admitted. The occasional squalling of these brats adds to the fun. No waltzing, no quadrilling has yet reached Pyrgo. The old Greek dance is all sufficient; it maintains its ground on an earthen floor, and laughs at innovation. Some people even bring their own provisions; and the host is seldom expected to be prepared with more than "a clean swept floor" and a few musicians. A man of the name of Stratta is the Weipert of Oxomaria. His costume is purely Hellenic, with one exception—a pair of English top-boots. With these he stamps out the time in a manner that out-Herods Herod; and he is thus enabled to confine his fiddlestick to the strings of the instrument, instead of flourishing it in the air for the mere purpose of beating time, which his boots more strikingly effect; the chief charm of Oriental music—noise—is, much to the gratification of his audience, considerably increased.

He who gives a dance is expected to prepare but his rooms, and to "find out Sneak's noise, nevertheless, even this, the music, is not at his sole expense; for after each bout the young men who have figured in the dance always throw the musicians a few lepras or drachma, which contributions, during the afternoon or evening, generally amount to a sufficient sum to remunerate them handsomely.

GREEK DANCE.—The Greek dance is commenced by three men holding the ends of two kerchiefs, in such a manner that they are, as it were, linked together. One generally waves and flourishes a third kerchief, while his companion on the other flank snaps his fingers in imitation of a castanet. They first make two or three circuits of the room, and at last break or cast off, when two select partners from the surrounding crowd. The two ladies take the disengaged ends of the kerchiefs on the flanks; so that the number in the dance now consists of five persons, who continue making the circuit of the apartment together, each showing off the most favorite steps, while the musicians cease not to play and sing most boisterously. In some cases the ladies take the disengaged ends of the kerchiefs held by the man in the centre, and the other men from the flanks. This is certainly the prettier fashion. In a few minutes three return to their seats, leaving but one lady and one gentleman to proceed with the more interesting part of the figure. These two face each other. The gentleman next "goes the circuit," following up the lady with as much anxiety as a young barrister looking out for a brief.—The art of making love is now explained by pantomimic action. Don Felix urges his suit, but Violante will not listen; the Don becomes gloomy, dances more slowly, and casts not a glance at his enamorata. Upon this Violante re-commences her coquet skirmishing, the gentleman is easily induced to make a second attack, Violante shows symptoms of surrender, signals are playfully exchanged with the white kerchiefs, the dances increase in rapidity, the music is sound, and cries from all parts of the room of "Vasta, vasta!" —quicker, quicker—and the manual applause of the company. When both of the dancers are fatigued, they make way for another set. The girls generally tire out two or three partners. The latter only are allowed to be relieved.—*Knight's Oriental Outlines.*

Daniel Boon.

DANIEL BOON, one of the first, one of most fearless of the pioneers to what was then a wilderness, "a dark and bloody ground," deserves a volume; and we trust ere long he will have one all to himself. We wish the old man had lived to see himself the hero, the sole hero of a story. The idea that his name would be in print was more fatal to his philosophy than the idea of suffering and death; and had he dreamed of being one day as noted as man ever can hope to be, it would have done more towards disturbing his saturnine gravity, than all the Indians that ever compound; born in the good old state of Virginia, he first tried North Carolina, then Kentucky, and at last swept on to Missouri, to his dying day, a pioneer. Thirty years old, he crossed the mountains, not to seek, as most at his age do, a competence and comfort, but to go through perils, and dangers, and hardships, that would have tried the heart and frame of any youth in christendom. For two months, without one companion—not even a dog—without home or help, he wandered among the wilds, his bed the ground; his canopy the trees; his lullaby the howl of the wolf and the yell of the savage. Taken by the Indians, he so won their regard and so tickled their vanity, by never *quite* outdoing them with the rifle, that money would not purchase his freedom. Escaping, for four days in succession he went on foot forty miles, and eat during the time but one meal. Without fear and without fierceness; abominating society, but a kind husband, and father, and fellow man: daring, when daring was the wiser part; prudent, when discretion was valor's better half; sagacious and clear-headed, but ever averse to civilization—he walked through life with the hardihood of youth, the decision of manhood, and the cool reason of age. He had his vices and faults, but had so few, that in his place and with his education, he was a marvel of virtue as well as of fortitude. So calmly did he anticipate death, that he prepared his own coffin beforehand. One he made, but finding it too small, he presented it to his son-in-law, and having fitted himself with a second, and polished it by long rubbing, he laid himself down and died, in life and death a veritable "Leatherstocking."—*Western Monthly Magazine.*

Albinos.

The editor of the United States Gazette, on a visit to the Cold Springs, near Cape Island, New Jersey, thus describes a family which he encountered in his walks:

Beyond the springs is a singular family of black persons, whose name I have forgotten. The mother has borne five children, two of them resembling in color (very dark) herself and her husband: the other three are Albinos; their features are those of the true African race, and closely resembling those of their parents; but their hair, though curling and crispy, is as white as snow. Their skin is a pure white, with a very slight tinge of pink.—Their eyes, though blue, have a mingling of pink, and are tremulous, and especially sensitive in the light, so much as to cause a slight distortion of the features, common to any whose weak eyes are suddenly exposed to a strong light. These children may be considered as the most perfect specimens of this species of nature's aberrations ever produced in this country. They are sprightly and intelligent, and acquire learning with as much ease as any other children, and are receiving what little instruction the circumstances of the parents will allow. I thought that the skins of the Albinos were softer than that of their black sisters, and the hair certainly seemed more silky and delicate.

Scott's palmy Days.

The palmy days of Scott's life were during the long sustained popularity of the Waverly novels. The universal acclamation with which his genius was hailed, resembled the royal progresses of the English marches some centuries ago,—or rather the imperial progress of a Trajan through the large domain of the Roman empire. The rapidity with which he amazed the world, might be likened, yet contrasted, with the masterly marches of his contemporary Napoleon. The extraordinary revenus from the novels fostered Scott's unfortunate ambition of becoming an extensive landed proprietor, after the old Scottish style, until the first modest purchase expanded into the baronial estate of Abbotsford. The severest trials of human character were visited upon him—unbounded prosperity and a disastrous reverse. In the former, neither his modesty nor his equanimity was disturbed by the applause of the world reaching him through the thin curtain of concealed authorship. His prosperity gave, too, proof abundant of the truth that genius is of the heart as well as of the head. The comprehensiveness of his sympathies might be illustrated by his friendly intercourse not only with his contemporaries in literature, Wordsworth, Southey, Crabbe, Moore, and others, but with men of every station in society, with the king, with the great captain, the statesman, the chemist, the sculptor, the painter, the tragedian,—with Wellington, Canning, and Davy, with Chantry, and Wilkes, and Kemble,—and besides these with friends in the walks of humble life. That Scott enterteined an habitual deference to rank is visible in various parts of his biography; how far this was the result of anti- and of his native kindness of temper, we canont stop to inquire; but that it was that exaggerrated weakness, which some have alleged, and thet he was unable to see a plebian Scotchman in the shadow of a nobleman, Scotch or English, we cannot credit. So far as the means of judging are before the world, we see no reason to suppose that Scott's aristocratic sentiment, high-toned as it undoubtedly was, contained the baser elements of a fawning servility, or that it contracted the sphere of his sympathies.

We can revert to Scott's domestic character no farther than to express an opinion, formed in the way of inference, that his marriage, though by no means an unhappy one, was ill-sorted and uncongenial. It is impossible to repress the regret, that his earlier attachment had not been successful. The flame of his first love was not extinct, when he was a white-haired old man. He stood greatly in need of a counsellor, for with all his kindliness of nature, he went through life in some respects solitary hearted. Had there been more wisdom in his choice, the noiseless, dewlike influence of a wife's advice would not have been shed upon a head and heart like him in vain. It may be added here, that Scott's companionable and judicious correspondence with his son presents him in a pleasing light.—*Phil. Spirit of the Times.*

From the Quarterly Review.

The Indians.

In the splendid regions of the "far west," which lie between Missouri and the Rockey Mountains, there are living at this moment on the Prairies, various tribes who, if left to themselves, would continue for ages to live on the buffalo which cover the plains. The skins of these animals, however, have become valuable to the whites and accordingly, this beautiful verdant country, and these brave and independent people have been invaded by white traders, who, by paying them a pint of whiskey for each skin (or "robe," as they are termed in America,) which sell at New York for ten or twelve dollars, induce them to slaughter these animals in immense number, leaving their flesh, the food of the Indian, to rot and putrify on the ground. No ambition or caution can arrest for a moment the propelling power of the whiskey; accordingly, in all directions these poor thoughtless beings are seen furiously riding under its influence in pursuit of their game, or in other words, in the fatal exchange of food for poison. It has been very attentively calculated by the traders, who manage to collect per annum, from 150,000 to 200,000 buffalo skins, that at the rate at which these animals are now disposed of, in ten years, they will be killed off. Whenever that event happens, Mr. Catlin very justly prophesies that 250,000 Indians, now living in a plain of nearly three thousand miles in extent, must die of starvation and become a prey to wolves, or that they must either attack the powerful neighboring tribes of the Rocky Mountains, or in utter phrenzy of despair rush upon the white population in the forlorn hope of dislodging it. In the two latter alternatives there exists no chance of success, and we have therefore the appaling reflection before us, that these 250,000 Indians must soon be added to the dismal list of those who have already withered and disappeared, leaving their country to bloom and flourish in the possession of the progeny of another world!

The Decline of Life.

There is an eventide in human life—a season when the eye becomes dim, and the strength decays, and when the winter of age begins to shed upon the human head its prophetic snows. It is the season of life to which the autumn is most analogous, and which it becomes, and much would it profit you, my elder readers, to mark the instruction which it brings. The spring and summer days are gone, and with them not only the joys they knew, but many friends who gave them. You have entered upon the autumn of your being, and whatever may have been the profusion of your spring, or the warm temperament of your summer, there is yet a season of stillness and solitude which the benificence of heaven affords you, in which you may meditate upon the past and prepare yourself for the mighty change which you may soon undergo.

It is now you may understand the magnificent language of Heaven — it mingles its voice with that of Revelation! it summons you in the hours when the leaves of the winter are gathering to the evening study which the mercy of Heaven has provided in the book of salvation. And while the shadowy valley opens, which leads to the abode of death, it speaks of that love which conducts to those green pastures, and those still waters where there is an eternal Spring to the children